

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KINSHA 05292 161958Z

62

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 5292

LONDON FOR ASST SEC DAVIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, CG

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER: DAVIS VISIT

AND ELIMA ARTICLE

1. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER BAGBENI RECEIVED ME AT 7:00 P.M. JUNE 16. HE BEGAN BY APOLOGIZING FOR A MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH LED SOME IDIOT IN HIS PROTOCOL SERVICE TO CALL ME TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IN TENNIS CLOTHES. WHEN HE HAD HEARD OF THIS HE HAD REVERSED SIGNALS AND ALLOWED ME TO SHOWER AND DRESS BEFORE RETURNING. HE SAID IT HAD BEEN A MISTAKE AND HE WAS SORRY.

2. HE THEN SAID THAT HE HAD TRIED TO LOCATE ZOLA, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF WHAT I HAD SAID LAST NIGHT BUT BECAUSE THEIR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WAS ALSO INTERESTED. IT APPEARED ZOLA WAS PLANNING TO TALK IN PRIVATE COMPANIES IN THE US AND THAT IT WAS NOT INTENDED THAT HE HAVE ANY OFFICIAL CONTACTS THIS VISIT. I SAID FINE, BUT IF HE HAD EXTRA TIME, HE WAS WELCOME IN THE DEPARTMENT.

3. BAGBENI THEN SAID HE REGRETTED TO TELL ME THAT THE CALENDAR WAS EXTREMELY CROWDED DURING THE PERIOD OF FINKIN AND THAT IT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINSHA 05292 161958Z

WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO RECEIVE ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS.

I THOUGHT THAT ONE OVER FOR A MINUTE, SAID I WAS SORRY TO HEAR IT, AND (SINCE THEY HAD PUT IT IN TERMS OF BEING TOO BUSY) I ADDED I WOULD THEN HOPE THAT THEY WOULD PROPOSE MORE SUITABLE DATES FOR A FUTURE VISIT. BAGBENI SAID HE WOULD EXPLORE THAT. I DID NOT SAY THAT DAVIS MIGHT COME FOR FIKIN ALONE BUT THAT POSSIBILITY EXIST FOR WHAT LITTLE TACTICAL USE WE MIGHT WISH TO MAKE OF IT. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO FORGET IT OR TO FIND A SUBSTITUTE AND WHILE I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH TIME TO THINK OF IT, SOMEONE LIKE ED GULLION MIGHT DO. I CAN'T IMAGINE IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES SENDING THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE OR ANYONE OF THAT STATURE BUT THE MATTER REQUIRES REFLECTION.

4. BAGBENI THEN INDICATED IT WAS MY TURN AND I SAID THAT HE COULD GUESS THAT I WAS GREATLY CONCERNED WITH THE SCURRILOUS EDITORIAL IN ELIMA. I TOLD HIM I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS BUT THAT SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, I KNEW THAT I HAD HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY COUP AND I HAD EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT MY GOVERNMENT WAS NOT INVOLVED IN ANY WAY. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT SOMEONE WAS AT WORK TRYING TO DIVIDE US, TO DIVIDE PRESIDENT MOBUTU FROM PRESIDENT FORD AND ZAIRE FROM THE US. AGAIN SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, I COULD SAY THAT EVERY EFFORT I AND MY EMBASSY HAD MADE IN SUPPORT OF US POLICY HAD BEEN INTENDED TO PROMOTE BETTER RELATIONS. US GOVERNMENT AND I HAD THE GREATEST ADMIRATION FOR THE PRESIDENT. WE WERE TRYING TO WORK WITH, NOT AGAINST ZAIRE. THERE WAS ONE POINT IN THE EDITORIAL WITH WHICH I AGREED AND THAT WAS WHERE IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT THE CABINET SHOULD CLARIFY THE FACTS. I SAID I COULD BE CONFIDENT THAT IF AN OBJECTIVE INVESTIGATION WERE CARRIED OUT, THE FACTS WOULD CLEARLY INDICATE THAT WHATEVER HAD HAPPENED, THE US HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED. I HOPED GOZ WOULD THEN MAKE THAT CLEAR.

5. HE STARED AT ME FOR A LONG TIME AND SAID THAT THE INVESTIGA-

TION WAS IN COURSE AND WE WOULD SEE. HE ADDED THAT WHERE THERE WAS SMOKE THERE WAS FIRE. NOT NECESSAIRLY, I REPLIED. SMOKE ALSO CAME FROM SMOKE MACHINES AND SOMEONE, I REPEATED, WAS TRYING TO POISON OUR RELATIONS.

6. HE SAID THAT IF INFORMATION BECAME AVAILABLE, HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME AND HE ASKED THAT IF I HAD ANY REACTION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KINSHA 05292 161958Z

FROM MY GOVERNMENT, I WOULD PASS IT TO HIM. I ASSURED HIM I WOULD. THERE BEING NOTHING ELSE TO SAY, I TOOK MY LEAVE AND HE MOST AMIABLY SHOWED ME OUT, AGAIN APOLOGIZING FOR THE EARLIER COME AS YOU ARE SUMMONS.
HINTON

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